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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ETRD](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: EUROPE: EU-RUSSIA TENSIONS; WESTERN
HEMISPHERE: VENEZUELA, CHAVEZ'S REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE;
SAO PAULO

1. "Cold War Signs"

Center-right national circulation and influential daily O Estado de S. Paulo editorialized (5/28): "In addition to the Middle East horrors, a new focus of international tension has continued to expand in recent months and weeks. It is the remarkable deterioration of the relations between Russia and the West. Without any exaggeration, they have never been worse since the collapse of the USSR. The tension, resulting from an escalation of misunderstandings and reciprocal accusations, revives a phrase that everyone thought buried: 'cold war'.... At the root of the new conflict are the Kremlin's trend of imposing itself on former vassal Baltic States such as Estonia and Lithuania - which not only obtained independence, but also joined NATO - and to influence the European Union's policies.... The strategic military problem created by the U.S. decision to install anti-missile shields in Poland and the Czech Republic must be added to that [worsening]."

2. "Ch vez Takes Another Step To Suffocate Any Opposition"

An editorial in business-oriented Valor Economico (5/29) maintained: "The closing of Caracas Television represented not only a tough blow against the opposition, but also a more significant advance in the Venezuelan government's control over the media, one of the basic keys of Ch vez's '21st Century's socialism.' Now the government has five television networks, while all private networks have given up criticizing the government because they fear challenging Ch vez. The president has transformed formal mechanisms of democracy into a grotesque representation and has cut one by one the chances of a political opposition to run for power.... As with all of the opposition sectors against the president, the television station participated in 2002 in the mistaken strategy that resulted in the quasi coup that removed Ch vez from the presidency for just two days.... RCTV should be given first the right of defense, but nothing happened. Ch vez has created all the conditions to make the opposition a mere decorative figure, and to pave the way to maintain himself in power for two more decades. The rapid changes he has promoted in Venezuela's structures of power has put the nation on an irreversible course towards a leftist caudillo-type government.... Ch vez is following the example of Stalini dictatorships. After creating a political infrastructure that ensures his permanence in power, he begins to frequently interfere in private life."

McMullen